



Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida & Power counties

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The unemployment rate in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area rose four-tenths of a percent to 2.7 percent in November but remains historically low. The unemployment rate in November 2006 was 3.4 percent and was considered low at that time. The increased rate reflects the loss of some seasonal jobs in construction and transportation and a big loss in government jobs with Idaho Fish and Game, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service as well as the closure of Southeast Idaho Home Health Service. Health care payrolls are growing as new and expanded services come on the scene, and jobs are expanding in the financial services sector as institutions open new branch offices and payday loan outlets proliferate.

AREA INTERESTS

- NorthWestern Energy is proposing a 500 kilovolt transmission line between southwestern Montana and southeastern Idaho to relieve constraints on the high-voltage transmission needed to meet demands of population and economic growth. NorthWestern Energy executives maintain more capacity will be needed to handle generation from proposed clean coal technology and renewable energy. A 2006 study mandated by the U.S. Department of Energy identified the Idaho-Montana area as congested. Construction on the line will begin in 2010 and be completed by 2013, assuming timely regulatory approval from all local, state and federal agencies. Rocky Mountain Power is proposing a \$4 billion 345 kilovolt transmission line originating in Wyoming and running through Oneida County.
- Qwest Communications has extended broadband access to rural areas of Bancroft, Lava Hot Springs and Grace under the broadband matching grant program passed by the 2006 Idaho Legislature. Installation of high speed lines should help market local products and attract new businesses and will cost the same for rural residents in the small communities as it does for residents of Pocatello or Boise.
- Much of southeastern Idaho will benefit from the multibillion-dollar federal spending bill that provides

more than \$629 million for two large Idaho National Laboratory projects, \$2 million for rainbow trout studies to the Aberdeen agricultural research center, \$341,000 for the Cooperative Telehealth Center at Portneuf Medical Center, \$243,000 for the Franklin County Medical Center, \$350,000 for continued work on U.S. Highway 30 from McCammon to the Topaz bridge, \$140,000 for the Pocatello Community Recreation Center, \$300,000 for Chesterfield historic preservation, \$141,000 for Idaho State University's Land Management Observation Program and \$9.6 million for the cooperative Potato Cyst Nematode Program.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BANNOCK COUNTY

- An Italian restaurant, PV' Pasta & Vino, will be opening in downtown Pocatello in the location of the former Michelle's City Lights.
- Work is progressing on Don Aslett's new 75,000-square-foot Museum of Clean, slated to open next fall. In addition to many historic displays the building will include a two-floor ark, 17 feet high, 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. The ark will be the gateway to the museum's Walk Through Time. A company spokesperson called it symbolic of how God cleansed the world by flooding it with rain for 40 days and 40 nights. The museum is expected to cost about \$6 million and features a "green design" in engineering, which emphasizes energy conservation and recycling.
- Merrill Lynch agreed to loan Hoku Scientific Inc. up to \$185 million to build and start up its manufacturing plant in Pocatello. Construction of the 200,000 square-foot facility should begin early this year with production of polysilicon beginning in mid-2009.
- The city leaders of Pocatello and Chubbuck want to issue bonds to finance major repairs and renovations to Holt Arena. Property owners in Pocatello will be asked to approve a bond for about \$20 million, and the residents of Chubbuck will be asked to approve a bond of about \$4 million. Both require two-thirds of the votes. Because Holt is being used for many more events than originally intended, the university has

been unable to keep up with repairs and has done only one major improvement. The vote is scheduled for Feb. 5.

- A Phoenix based company, ON Semiconductor, is buying AMI Semiconductor for about \$915 million in an all-stock transfer. ON is about three times the size of AMIS, and it will be sometime in March before local employees know what On Semiconductor plans for the Pocatello plant.
- The study conducted for the State Board of Education indicates it would be feasible for the state to operate a medical school if students attend classes at a university for two years and then complete their training at four clinics throughout the state. The study also indicated it would take about seven years to phase in such a program and alluded to indirect economic benefits of a medical school such as increased research grants.
- Scott Malm has opened Family First Health Center South in Pocatello. Malm is a physician's assistant and has worked in the emergency room at Portneuf Medical Center the past 10 years. He has also worked for Health West in family practice, serving the rural communities in the area. Initially, he will have only one employee but plans to hire more workers as the practice grows. Malm's supervising physician is Dr. Gerald Knouf.
- Portneuf Medical Center construction crews finished the new parking garage, access road, framing and exterior work for the new medical office and admitting entrance in December. The hospital has spent the last of a \$65 million bond issued in March 2005 and will finance further construction in the short term through operating revenues, anticipating a decision soon on the operational model of the new facility.
- Brock Wilks has broken ground for a new \$1.7 million funeral home in Chubbuck, the city's first. The 10,000-square-foot building should be finished in June 2008 and will include a crematorium and reception center.
- One bank and two credit unions will be opening in Pocatello in 2008. Advantage Plus, Potelco and Bank of Commerce have all announced plans or begun construction of new facilities to meet growing customer demand. In addition, Advantage Plus is scheduled to open new corporate headquarters offices in July.
- A new trailer supply store is coming to Pocatello. State Trailer Supply sells parts and accessories for recreational vehicles and trailers. The company is based in Utah but has other locations in Arizona.

- Bannock County commissioners announced a 5 percent increase in development fees for 2008. It is only the second increase in 24 years and is needed to offset increased costs of posting public hearing and variance requests.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY

- The draft plan of the newest Oregon Trail-Bear Lake Scenic Byway identifies 15 key sites in Bear Lake, Caribou and south Bannock counties. A major emphasis of the plan is to obtain and erect signs which tell the story of the events along the byway and direct visitors to other sites.

BINGHAM COUNTY

- Construction is on schedule for a three-story medical office building that will allow consolidation of physicians for greater convenience of patients. Construction should be completed by December.
- Economic impact studies done by Regional Development Alliance Inc. for the Bingham Economic Development Corp. indicate the assistance provided to Premier Technology and Sartori Foods is having an immediate economic impact. Headquartered in Blackfoot, Premier Technology employs more than 275 workers and has invested more than \$8 million in Bingham County. The direct annual economic impact to Bingham County is nearly \$28 million. The Phase 1 and II expansion at Sartori Foods has added 153 full time jobs so far.
- Bob Grayson opened a combination bar and retail wine/beer and tobacco store in Blackfoot. The Wine Garden will feature three wines and beers each week and features large flat-screen, high definition televisions.
- Debbie Munns, owner of Debbie's Toasted Subs & More in Blackfoot, held her grand opening this month. She employs four to handle both in-store and take-out orders.

CARIBOU COUNTY

- Caribou County commissioners unanimously approved the subdivision plat for the Afton Subdivision two miles west of Soda Springs near Alexander Reservoir.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed the second five-year review of the Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp. Superfund site north of Soda Springs. The review found concentrations of ground and water contaminants within acceptable ranges. The next phase will take about 15 months. To read the full reports on line, go to www.epa.gov/r10earth, click on subject "K" in the subject index to find Kerr-McGee.

- The U.S. Forest Service sent out newsletters updating information on cleanup of selenium in phosphate mining areas. The first phase of the Nu-West plan is to remove contaminated sediment at the East Mill Creek drainage beginning in late summer. Feasibility and investigation plans for cleaning up the Woolley Valley Mine by Rhodia LLC will be developed for a public hearing this spring. Construction of the Pole Canyon Creek diversion and monitoring wells was completed in October, and a recent investigation confirmed the integrity of the system. Details of area remediation projections can be found at www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

- Twin Lakes Canal Co. will close its reservoirs in Franklin County to sportsmen and recreational use under the Integrated License Process Revised Study Plan submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Twin Lakes filed the statement in response to an Idaho Fish and Game request to conduct a pump screen study as part of the preliminary licensing process for the proposed Bear River Narrows Hydroelectric Project. If the ban on fishing and recreational use is carried through next summer, it will negatively impact revenue generated at local business from sale of recreation-based items and fuel.
- A 19-lot subdivision near the mouth of the Oneida Narrows in Riverdale has been approved, and lots will be sold beginning this spring. The subdivision will be fairly open and have some covenants to restrict height of buildings and require subdued lighting. In addition, conservation easements will extend about 100 feet back from the river and include a trail system.

- Franklin County joined only 1,252 other areas across the country in being designated a StormReady weather community by the National Weather Service. The designation certifies that Franklin County has developed plans to handle severe weather and flooding threats. Some of the criteria include a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center, having more than one way to receive weather warnings, promotion of public readiness and development of a formal hazardous weather plan.

POWER COUNTY

- Harms Memorial Hospital plans to build a new facility about a mile south of its current location in American Falls, pending voter approval of a potential bond issue. Local authorities believe that a bond might not be an additional burden to property owners if the proposed coal gasification plant is built in Power County. Because the gasification plant would likely double the county's tax base, residents could expect their property taxes to be reduced by an amount similar to what a bond for hospital construction would add. Construction would begin in late 2008 or early 2009.
- A landmark in the city of American Falls since 1963, the Melody Lanes bowling alley burned to the ground in early December. Owners Troy and Shannon Carothers have not yet decided whether to rebuild.

See page 38 for southeastern Idaho labor force and nonfarm jobs data table for November 2007.

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Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison & Teton counties

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- Two new elementary schools are under construction for the growing Bonneville Joint School District 93 that covers the area surrounding Idaho Falls. The principals and students will be involved in naming both new schools. The schools are located in new

subdivision northeast of Idaho Falls. About 500 children will attend each elementary school so boundaries will be changing to accommodate the move of students from other schools. The growing district was already at capacity the first day of the 2006 school year when Rimrock and Woodland Hills Elementary Schools were opened because population growth exceeded estimates. With the new facilities, the district

South Central Idaho Data – November 2007

Twin Falls-Jerome MicSA Labor Force & Employment – Twin Falls and Jerome counties

	Nov 2007*	Oct 2007	Nov 2006	<u>% Change From</u>	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	48,570	48,900	48,910	-0.7	-0.7
Unemployment	1,080	990	1,390	9.1	-22.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.2	2.0	2.8		
Total Employment	47,490	47,910	47,520	-0.9	-0.1
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	49,370	49,720	49,260	-0.7	0.2
Unemployment	1,000	770	1,320	29.9	-24.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.0	1.6	2.7		
Total Employment	48,370	48,950	47,940	-1.2	0.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	41,450	41,380	39,700	0.2	4.4
Goods-Providing Industries	7,680	7,890	7,020	-2.7	9.4
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,530	2,550	2,390	-0.8	5.9
Manufacturing	5,120	5,310	4,600	-3.6	11.3
Food Manufacturing	2,880	3,070	2,500	-6.2	15.2
Other Manufacturing	2,240	2,240	2,100	0.0	6.7
Service-Providing Industries	33,770	33,490	32,680	0.8	3.3
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	11,030	10,690	10,280	3.2	7.3
Wholesale Trade	1,980	1,990	1,900	-0.5	4.2
Retail Trade	6,470	6,190	6,050	4.5	6.9
Utilities	140	140	150	0.0	-6.7
Transportation & Warehousing	2,440	2,370	2,180	3.0	11.9
Information	660	650	630	1.5	4.8
Financial Activities	1,620	1,690	1,720	-4.1	-5.8
Professional & Business Services	4,850	4,720	4,900	2.8	-1.0
Educational & Health Services	5,410	5,390	5,100	0.4	6.1
Leisure & Hospitality	3,060	3,120	3,010	-1.9	1.7
Other Services	1,450	1,470	1,410	-1.4	2.8
Government Education	3,410	3,400	3,290	0.3	3.6
Government Administration	2,280	2,360	2,340	-3.4	-2.6

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month